educational feature deserves special mention. This is the two weekly orchestral practices, at which standard and modern works are rehearsed, and advanced students are afforded the opportunity of preparing themselves for public life by playing or singing with the band. The fortnightly concerts are conducted also with this view, and the terminal orchestral concerts are devoted entirely to the appearance of students and to the production of their compositions.

Elsewhere in our present issue (p 588) we give some details of a scheme just instituted by the Academy for the training of teachers. This departure is an important one and, if it is supported as it should be, will do much to raise the standard of teaching in this country. It is a gain to find teaching recognised in a great music school as a science based on psychology.

With our August issue we presented an illustration of the external appearance of the new Academy, reproduced from the design of the architects (Messrs. Ernest George & Yeates). The site is in Marylebone Road, almost at the corner of York Gate, Regent's Park, and nearly facing Marylebone Church and within a short distance of Baker Street railway station, *viâ* which practically all London and the suburbs can be reached without quitting cover. The building (which has been erected by the contractors, Messrs. G. E. Wallis & Sons, of Maidstone) consists of a central block with two wings. The east wing contains the concert-hall, 122 feet long and 45 feet wide, estimated to accommodate an audience of about a thousand persons. It contains—or will soon—a fine organ by Messrs. Norman & Beard, the gift of Mrs. Threlfall in memory of her late husband, who, as already stated above, was for some years the chairman of the Committee of Management. The main building contains about fifty class-rooms, in the construction of which the latest devices for deadening sound outside the rooms have been adopted. There are double doors to all the teaching rooms. The west wing is devoted to offices, libraries, &c., and there is ample dining room accommodation in the basement, and two practice organs on the top floors are placed well out of hearing. The entrance leads to a marble hall where, in the centre of a tessellated pavement, and surrounded by a wreath, is inscribed the motto of the Academy, comprising (says Mr. Corder in his description, from which some of the foregoing details are taken) in three brief words the whole of human wisdom: 'SING UNTO GOD.'

The Autumn term, commencing September 23, will be held in the new building.

The new Royal Academy of Music is a monument of the industry, courage and sacrifice of many devoted apostles of the Art. That the special facilities for carrying on its great work that are now provided will enable the institution to prosper exceedingly, will be the hope of thousands of well-wishers.

Floreat R.A.M.!

REFLECTIONS ON BAYREUTH.

BY ERNEST NEWMAN.

I suppose nearly every one comes away from Bayreuth saying that he will never go again; yet somehow or other he *does* return. When we are there we are perhaps abnormally sensitive to the many discomforts and inconveniences of the whole business,—the excessive amount of travelling necessary in order to get a few hours of music, the generally unsatisfactory nature of one's rooms, the coarse and heavy German fare that the restaurants provide for us, the enervating heat, the imperfect ventilation of the theatre, the wretched quality of a good deal of the singing, the debauch of atrocious Wagnerian 'art'—engravings, photographs, busts, Graal-cups, and so on—that makes every other shop-window an offence to the eye. Most of us come away swearing that the balance of æsthetic pleasure we bring away with us is not worth the expenditure of time, trouble, and money, and that this is certainly our last Bayreuth; yet a year or two afterwards we shall probably be found willing to endure it all again. I need not pause to analyse the secret of this hold that Bayreuth has upon us; every one, whether he has been there or not, realises that it is Wagner, even more than Wagner's art, that draws us there,—that in Bayreuth we feel, as we do nowhere else on earth, the conquering might of this man and his profound and justifiable belief in himself. And so, though this year I personally came away exhausted with the cruel heat, and irritated at the deplorable quality of certain features of the performances, and swearing that never, no never, &c., &c., I am pretty certain to make the pilgrimage again before long. Only I shall wait until Bayreuth is in other hands; Wagner plus wild horses will not drag me to another performance that is controlled by the present members of the family. I don't want to lose *all* my admiration for Wagner just yet. Of this, however, more anon.

Bayreuth becomes a jollier and jollier place the less serious your intentions are. It must be heaven for the mere *flâneur*, out simply for food and drink and sunlight and conversation and pretty dresses, with the music thrown in in the evenings. But if you really want to think very hard about anything you must keep out of the crowd; and to the young student who wants to think hard about that amazing bundle of problems that we call Wagner I would say, 'Go by yourself and keep as much as you can to yourself, or to one or two kindred spirits.' The best way to get the full emotional value out of Bayreuth is to avoid the noisy, cosmopolitan restaurants, with their ceaseless chatter and clatter,—to take a few biscuits with you and munch them in the more solitary parts of the woods between the Acts, and to make a quiet meal at home at the end of the performance. The student has to choose between this Spartan self-denial plus the full effect of the music-dramas, and a week of social merriment minus a good deal of the effect of what he has heard in the theatre. Perhaps, however, I ought not to dogmatise

I have tried both plans myself, and no doubt if the ascetic and the carnal ideals were put before me in blunt antithesis for my choice, I should be weak enough to plump for the latter. It is certainly good to have some one to talk to at times, either to communicate the overflow of your enthusiasm or to work off in strong language the fury that some of the things they do at Bayreuth arouse in you. And this last time, at any rate, our own little party was so harmonious and so jolly that one very readily gave up the reflective ideal,—even if the appalling heat would have permitted much reflection. We felt no shame, though perhaps we should have done, in telling the Wagnerian stories in Limericks at supper. The Wagner Association held its solemn and sacred meetings nightly in the same restaurant. I hope no breath of these Limericks reached the chaste ears of the members. Perhaps the hot weather was answerable for this aberration, and for the disrespectful description of Mime, by a young and irrepressible member of the party, as 'one of the Nibs.' Anyhow, this is the effect the holy air of Bayreuth has upon some people.

But, after bad performances, disappointed and disillusioned men may be forgiven anything; and frankly, some of the things we heard at the first cycle this year were maddeningly bad. It was as well for the security of the theatre and of Villa Wahnfried that other things were extremely good. No one who saw it will ever forget the picture that greeted his astonished eyes when the curtain rolled back and showed the setting of the third Act of the 'Meistersinger,' with the spacious meadow in front and the complete circuit of the old walled and battlemented city in the background. I have never seen any stage picture that came so near to making you feel that it had a soul. Now and again, too, we got that peculiar pleasure that Bayreuth seems to give us more abundantly than any other theatre,—the delight given by the perfect correspondence of the music and the gestures. The best example, perhaps, was in the untying of Alberich's bonds by Loge in the 'Rhinegold,' where each right-and-left fling of the rope seemed the exact material counterpart of the darting phrases in the orchestra. But Bayreuth always rides a good principle to death. In some of its attempts to achieve this synchronism of gesture and tone it becomes ludicrously wooden and mechanical. In the final scene of the 'Valkyrie, for instance, Brynhilde had evidently been taught at two points to raise her hands slowly above her head, the full stretch to be reached each time at the climax of the phrase. The melody, however, is so long and slow that a gradual uplifting of the arms was impossible; so what we had was a series of jerks and pauses, with the hands coming into final position with a kind of click as the theme touched its highest point. We do not mind the doll in 'Les Contes d'Hoffmann' behaving like an automaton, but we would rather Brynhilde did not do it. The Bayreuth intelligence strikes one, generally speaking, as a kind of cupboard that has had all sorts of things,—jewels and rubbish,—pitched into it at random for many years; it badly wants emptying and the contents sorting out by some vigorous and unsparing hand. As it is, we can safely say that there is no performance at Bayreuth that gives you complete pleasure; if one thing is right, another is wrong,—and wrong in a way that could be so easily altered. This year the most harmonious performances as a whole were those of the 'Rhinegold' and the 'Meistersinger.' In the latter no one was quite first-rate with the exception of Heinrich Schultz as Beckmesser. (Schultz, we were told, was formerly a chorus-singer at Weimar. He made as good a Beckmesser as I have ever seen, managing to be humorous without a suspicion of the usual clownishness.) But all the chief singers were young, and the opera had throughout the spirit of youthfulness that suits. The orchestra, too, under Richter, was admirable. Each of the other performances was largely spoiled by singing of the most wretched description. 'Parsifal' was ruined, for me, at any rate, by Van Dyck. His first entrance upon the stage was enough to disillusionise the least questioning of the faithful. Instead of the slender, unsophisticated boy we expected, there bounced on to the stage a mature and bulky personage who looked more like Friar Tuck than Parsifal, who made some of the queerest noises with his throat, and who posed all through the evening with the usual self-assurance of the popular tenor. Anything less like Parsifal I could hardly imagine. Why does Bayreuth do these things? Does it suppose that its visitors are so ignorant of singing, of acting, and of Wagner as not to resent being compelled to sit through an experience of this kind? Will it never recognise that it does not follow that because an actress sang a part well some fifteen or twenty years ago a younger singer could not sing it better now? This year not all the intelligence of some of the women could reconcile us to the failure, or partial failure, of their voices; what pleasure can a singer's long experience of a part give us, if she has a voice that you could shave with? Why should people be asked to travel a thousand miles to hear anything but the best singing it is possible to get? I would not be misunderstood. I have no prejudice against the venerable ladies to whom Bayreuth thinks fit to entrust some of the great Wagnerian parts. I would gladly see them sitting in the theatre, surrounded by their grandchildren. But to hear them sing,—no, that I will never willingly do again.

And the men are often far worse even than the women. I should have thought that the climax had been reached with Van Dyck in 'Parsifal'; but Jakob Urlus, as Siegmund, was worse still, and Von Bary, as Siegfried, an easy winner even over Urlus. The German Sprechgesang is bad enough at any time, but that of Von Bary is sometimes more than any one constituted like myself can stand. The Sprechgesang, I suspect, was the invention of some one who, being unable to sing, managed to persuade other people that speaking was better,—just as the fox who had had his tail taken off in the trap argued so convincingly that the

stump was a more dignified organ than the full tail, that all the other foxes cut off theirs at once. I do not know what the average German thinks of it; but the average musical Englishman would rather have ten minutes' decent singing than ten hours of the shouting, and barking, and yelping through the nose that we have to endure from some of the Bayreuth tenors and baritones. Again I ask, Why does Bayreuth treat us like this? If the Wagner family do not know the difference between good singing and bad, they are not fit to have control of Bayreuth, and the sooner the theatre passes out of their hands the better for it, for us, and for Wagner's reputation. If they *do* know the difference, yet deliberately fob us off with exhibitions of incompetence of this kind, the least one can say is that it is hardly cricket. They might remember that we subscribe to Bayreuth months in advance, without knowing the name of a single one of the conductors or singers. Villa Wahnfried might reflect that if we trust it so frankly its duty is not to abuse our trust as sadly as it sometimes does. With all the world to choose from, singers for Bayreuth ought to be selected for other qualifications than their appetite for blacking. But until a perception of their duty to the musical world dawns upon the Wagner family, intending English visitors would do well to insist upon knowing the names of the proposed singers before they take their tickets. I can conceive no greater annoyance than to buy your programme an hour or so before the performance, and to discover that you have gone all that way simply to hear no better Parsiful than a Van Dyck, or no better Siegfried than a Von Bary.

Against these distressing experiences there were a few more agreeable ones to be set. The Mime of Hans Breuer was as finished as ever. Lieban is better in one or two respects; but Lieban was built for Mime, and hardly needs to play it. Breuer is really a very burly man, which makes it all the more wonderful that he should simulate smallness and weakness so well as he does; in certain moments, as when he pulled at the rope of the forge-bellows and, holding on a second too long, seemed almost to be lifted off his feet by the rope as it went back, you would have sworn there was not the strength of a fly in the man's body. Altogether Breuer was a delight from first to last. Walter Soomer, as Wotan, was always dignified and sonorous. The Loge (Heinrich Hensel) would have been first-rate but for a suspicion of stiffness in his movements. The Alberich (Habich), Gunther (Weil) and Hagen (Braun) were all above the average. Anna Bahr-Mildenburg was a clumsy Kundry, but, as those who have seen her in 'Elektra' will agree, an artist with the unmistakable grand manner. Saltzmann-Stevens, as Sieglinde, looked very charming but sang disappointingly; perhaps the solemnity of a first appearence at Bayreuth was too much for her. The scenery was, as usual, a mixture of the bad and the superlatively good; 'Parsifal' was magnificently done, but some of the sets in the 'Ring' were in the old flat, uninteresting style. The mechanics of the performances,—the lighting, and so on—were generally excellent, though now and again a stupid thing was done. When Siegfried, for example, came to throw the slain Mime into the dragon's cave, the bundle of rags he picked up was so unmistakably smaller than the real Mime that a titter went round the theatre. Death surely does not waste the body so rapidly as this!

Karl Muck conducted 'Parsifal,' and Siegfried Wagner the 'Ring,' much to my regret,—for Siegfried is rarely more than a passable conductor, and is generally a rather poor one. With his nerveless, unrhythmic phrasing he comes nearer to making his father's music seem dull than one would have thought possible. No one admires Wagner as a musician more than I do; but I confess that this time, what with the lifeless conducting and the bad singing, I felt more frequently bored in the 'Ring' than I liked to admit to myself. So intense was this feeling towards the end of the fourth day that I stayed outside during the second Act of the 'Götter-dämmerung.' I understood, for the first time, how it is that people can sometimes go to Bayreuth Wagnerians and return anti-Wagnerians; I could realise from my own experience something of what Debussy felt on his memorable visit. The bad ventilation of the theatre, the irregular meals one has to put up with, the fatiguing heat,—these and other things tend to produce physical and mental weariness; and if the performance is not good at every point one begins to feel disillusioned here and there with regard to the music. A few of the phrases struck me this time as being on a par with some of the sententious, platitudinous lines in Shakespeare that are always applauded by the gallery and always set the literary critic's teeth on edge. Perhaps the point has gone out of the lines through endless repetition; perhaps there was never much point in them. Once or twice I was horrified to catch myself finding a touch of commonplace in certain passages in the 'Ring' that I had hitherto greatly admired. No doubt it was mostly Siegfried Wagner's fault. A man cannot be too careful in the choice of his children. On the whole I should say that, staging apart, two-thirds of the performances were not worth so long a journey and so much expense. And yet—Bayreuth is Bayreuth, and I shall certainly go again some day, but not until the Wagner theatre is run on purely artistic lines.

THE NEW 'WAGNER-LISZT.'

By William Ashton Ellis.

(*Continued from August No., p. 514.*)

II.

To pursue another of the many possibilities of research in this restored edition of the famous Correspondence, one of the first things to strike the observant is the belated appearance of a proper name only met in previous versions under the disguise of a single initial, now 'B.', now 'H.', or at times a mere 'X'. As in most cases that disguise had been easy to penetrate, of far greater